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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Addendum

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for thematic cluster I (A/73/352/Add.1). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 20 November 2018.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General (A/73/352) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. As in previous years, five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).[1] In addition to the budget proposals for the 14 missions presented under cluster II (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1), the Secretary-General has submitted a separate proposal for an additional cluster II mission, the recently established United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

[1] A/73/352/Add.1, A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1, A/73/352/Add.3, A/73/352/Add.4 and A/73/352/Add.5.

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(UNITAD) (A/73/352/Add.6, A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.1 and A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.2). The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions are contained in its main report (A/73/498), while the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA, UNAMI and UNITAD are covered in its related reports.[2]

II. Budget performance for 2018 and resource requirements for 2019

3. Table 1 below provides a summary of the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for the 11 special political missions under thematic cluster I, compared with the approved resources for 2018, and the projected expenditures for 2018, which is also presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/352/Add.1, table 1).

Table 1
Summary of resource requirements for thematic cluster I
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018			*2019*		*Variance*	
Mission	*Appropriation* (1)	*Estimated expenditures* (2)	*Estimated variance* (3)=(2)-(1)	*Total requirements* (4)	*Non-recurrent requirements* (5)	*2019 vs. 2018 Increase (decrease)* (6)=(4)-(1)	*Net requirements for 2019* (7)=(4)-(3)
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	2 792.1	2 700.5	(91.6)	2 775.8	19.7	(16.3)	2 684.2
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	2 118.2	2 227.6	109.4	2 198.2	–	80.0	2 307.6
Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	444.9	381.8	(63.1)	456.3	–	11.4	393.2
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)	367.7	319.8	(47.9)	363.7	–	(4.0)	315.8
United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions	1 750.7	2 022.6	271.9	1 887.1	–	136.4	2 159.0
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	16 428.3	16 118.8	(309.5)	16 402.2	56.8	(26.1)	16 092.7
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan	1 409.5	1 450.1	40.6	1 502.5	2.3	93.0	1 543.1
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	3 706.6	4 324.9	618.3	4 400.4	20.3	693.8	5 018.7
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	13 051.8	15 780.2	2 728.4	17 192.9	534.1	4 141.1	19 921.3
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi	6 370.9	6 441.9	71.0	7 489.5	224.0	1 118.6	7 560.5
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar	853.8	760.0	(93.8)	1 232.3	–	378.5	1 138.5
Total	**49 294.5**	**52 528.2**	**3 233.7**	**55 900.9**	**857.2**	**6 606.4**	**59 134.6**

[2] A/73/498/Add.1, A/73/498/Add.2, A/73/498/Add.3, A/73/498/Add.4 and A/73/498/Add.5.

4. Expenditures for 2018 through 31 December 2018 are projected at $52,528,200 for the 11 continuing missions under cluster I, compared with the appropriation of $49,294,500, resulting in an estimated overexpenditure of $3,233,700. A summary of significant variances between the 2018 appropriation and projected expenditures is provided in table 6 of the main report of the Secretary-General (A/73/352).

5. The resources proposed for 2019 for the 11 continuing missions under cluster I amount to $55,900,900 (net), representing an increase of $6,606,400, or 13.4 per cent, compared with the resources approved for 2018. A summary of variances between approved resources for 2018 and proposed resources for 2019 for continuing missions is provided in table 8 of the main report of the Secretary-General (A/73/352).

6. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table showing the explanation of variances between the 2018 budget and 2019 estimated expenditures (see annex to the present report).

A. Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements

7. Table 2 below presents positions approved for 2018, vacant positions as at 30 September 2018 and proposed staffing requirements for 2019 for the 11 missions under thematic cluster I. The Advisory Committee was informed that of the six positions that had been vacant for two years or longer under cluster I, as at 31 October 2018: four candidates had been selected and were on-boarding; the recruitment process for one position was ongoing; and one position had been filled.

Table 2
Thematic cluster I: staffing requirements

Mission	*Approved for 2018*	*Vacant positions as at 30 September*	*Proposed for 2019*	*New positions*	*Abolishment*	*Reclassifications*	*Relocation redeployment*
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	21 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 5 P-4, 1 P-3, 4 FS, 1 GS (OL), 5 LL)	3 (1 USG, 1 P-5, 1 P-3)	21 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 5 P-4, 1 P-3, 4 FS, 1 GS (OL), 5 LL)				
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	10 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 P-5, 3 P-4, 2 P-3, 2 GS (OL))	2 (1 ASG, 1 P-5)	10 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 P-5, 3 P-4, 2 P-3, 2 GS (OL))				
Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	2 (1 USG, 1 P-3)		2 (1 USG, 1 P-3)				
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)	3 (1 USG, 1 P-4, 1 GS (OL))	1 (1 USG)	3 (1 USG, 1 P-4, 1 GS (OL))				
United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions	7 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3, 1 GS (OL))		7 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3, 1 GS (OL))				
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	92 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-2, 3 D-1, 8 P-5, 15 P-4, 12 P-3, 1 P-2, 10 FS, 9 GS (OL), 31 LL)	19 (1 D-2, 2 D-1, 1 P-5, 6 P-4, 5 P-3, 1 P-2, 3 LL)	94 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-2, 3 D-1, 8 P-5, 16 P-4, 12 P-3, 1 P-2, 11 FS, 7 GS (OL), 33 LL)	1 P-4, 1 FS, 2 LL	2 GS (OL)		

Mission	*Approved for 2018*	*Vacant positions as at 30 September*	*Proposed for 2019*	*New positions*	*Abolishment*	*Reclassifications*	*Relocation redeployment*
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan	9 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 NPO, 2 LL)		9 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 NPO, 2 LL)				
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	27 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 4 P-5, 6 P-4, 4 P-3, 1 FS, 1 GS (OL), 1 NPO, 7 LL)	4 (2 P-5, 2 P-3)	27 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 4 P-5, 6 P-4, 4 P-3, 1 FS, 1 GS (OL), 1 NPO, 7 LL)				
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	95 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 7 P-5, 14 P-4, 11 P-3, 25 FS, 1 GS (OL), 8 NPO, 26 LL)	22 (1 P-5, 4 P-4, 3 P-3, 5 FS, 3 NPO, 6 LL)	98 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 6 P-5, 15 P-4, 11 P-3, 26 FS, 1 GS (OL), 8 NPO, 28 LL)	1 P-4, 1 FS, 2 LL	1 P-5		From Amman to Sana'a (1 P-4); from Sana'a to Aden (1 FS)[a]
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi	31 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 4 P-5, 5 P-4, 3 P-3, 7 FS, 1 GS (OL), 2 NPO, 5 LL)	2 (1 P-5, 1 P-3)	31 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 4 P-5, 5 P-4, 3 P-3, 7 FS, 1 GS (OL), 2 NPO, 5 LL)				
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar	5 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 LL)	3 (1 D-1, 1 P-4, 1 LL)	5 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 LL)				

Abbreviations: ASG, Assistant Secretary-General; FS, Field Service; GS (OL), General Service (Other level); LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer; USG, Under-Secretary-General.

[a] 1 P-4 (Political Affairs Officer) from Amman to Sana'a; and 1 Field Service (Security Officer) from Sana'a to Aden.

8. Staffing changes for 2019 are proposed for two missions, namely, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria (see paras. 10, 11 and 13 below) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (see paras. 12 and 13 below). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that no resources for general temporary assistance are required under cluster 1 for either 2018 or 2019.

9. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, with regard to staff of the 11 missions under cluster I, as at 30 September 2018, 15 temporary assignments involving a special post allowance, i.e. staff assuming higher-level responsibilities, had been granted. The Committee recalls that the Board of Auditors, in its report on the United Nations for the year ending 2017, observed that the granting of a special post allowance to staff had not been limited to exceptional cases during the biennium 2016–2017 and that the United Nations had stated that the overuse of temporary job openings was one of the main factors preventing stronger workforce planning in the Organization (A/73/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 93–99, and A/73/430, paras. 34 and 35).[3] **The Advisory Committee trusts that all vacant positions will be filled expeditiously and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to complete the recruitment process for the posts presently encumbered by the use of special post allowances promptly.**

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria

10. The following staffing changes are proposed by the Secretary-General (see A/73/352/Add.1, para. 150):

[3] The provisions governing special post allowance are contained in ST/SGB/2018/1, Staff Rule 3.10, and administrative instructions ST/AI/1999/17, ST/AI/1999/17/Amend.1 and ST/AI/2003/3.

(a) Establishment of one Chief Human Resources Officer position (P-4) in the support component in the Chief of Mission Support Office based in Geneva to provide advice on human resources planning, management and policy implementation issues;

(b) Establishment of two Finance Assistant positions (1 Field Service and 1 Local level), and one Human Resources Assistant position (Local level) in the Kuwait Joint Support Office, following an evaluation which determined that the client missions receiving support should share the costs related to the Support Office, with a corresponding reduction of such positions in UNAMA and UNAMI (see also para. 13 below);

(c) Abolishment of two Administrative Assistant positions (General Service (Other level)) in the substantive component of the Political Affairs Office based in Geneva.

11. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the establishment of one Chief Human Resources Officer position (P-4) was required as the decentralization of the delegation of authority is one of the central themes of the reform efforts of the Secretary-General.

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

12. The following staffing changes are proposed by the Secretary-General (see A/73/352/Add.1, para. 220):

(a) Establishment of one Political Affairs Officer position (P-4) in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at Headquarters for backstopping support;

(b) Establishment of two Human Resources Assistant positions (1 Field Service and 1 Local level) and one Finance Assistant position (Local level) at the Kuwait Joint Support Office with a corresponding reduction of these positions in UNAMA and UNAMI (see para. 13 below);

(c) Redeployment of one Political Affairs Officer position (P-4) in the Political Affairs Section from Amman to Sana'a for additional substantive support;

(d) Redeployment of one Security Officer position (Field Service) in the Safety and Security Section from Sana'a to Aden to enhance the Office's security capacity in Aden;

(e) Abolishment of one Senior Security Sector Reform Officer position (P-5) in Amman in the Security Sector Section as a result of delays in the peace process.

13. **While the Advisory Committee has no objection to an interim arrangement whereby the costs related to the aforementioned six positions at the Kuwait Joint Support Office would be carried by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Committee reiterates that the Support Office was initially established in response to the security situation in Iraq and later expanded to include certain support functions of UNAMA and other missions (A/72/371, paras. 71 and 72). The Committee reiterates that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/248 A, any changes to the existing and future service delivery model must be approved by the General Assembly (see A/72/7/Add.47, para. 32).**

Vacancy rates and vacant positions

14. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the budgeted and actual vacancy rates for 2018, as at 30 September 2018, and proposed vacancy rates for 2019 for the 11 missions under cluster I.

United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions

15. With respect to the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions, the Advisory Committee was informed that expenditures under international staff are projected at $1,580,600 for 2018, compared with the apportionment of $1,238,900, resulting in an estimated overexpenditure of $341,700 (28 per cent). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 September 2018, all positions were encumbered and that a 5 per cent vacancy rate was proposed for 2019, taking into account possible turnover of existing staff. The Committee was also informed that any underexpenditure as a result of the vacant Assistant Secretary-General position for a period of eight months had been offset by higher-than-budgeted expenditures under common staff costs, mainly as a result of the retirement of two staff members and the onboarding of three new staff members and related non-recurrent expenditures.

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)

16. With regard to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed vacancy rate of 21 per cent for international staff for 2019 was based on the average vacancy rate for the period from 1 January to 31 August 2018, but that the actual rate was subsequently reduced to 8 per cent. As at 30 September 2018, only two positions remained vacant and all positions were expected to be filled by the end of 2018. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the two vacant positions will be filled expeditiously and that information thereon will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar

17. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar was in its start-up phase in 2018 and that two of the five approved positions had been filled and the remaining three positions were under recruitment and were expected to be filled before 31 December 2018. The Committee was further informed that a 5 per cent vacancy rate was proposed for 2019, taking into account possible turnover of existing staff. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the three vacant positions will be filled expeditiously and that information thereon will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

18. **Taking into account its observations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's staffing requirements for 2019.**

B. Comments and recommendations on operational costs

19. The proposed resources for operational costs under thematic cluster I for 2019 amount to $21,090,900, reflecting an increase of $179,900, or 0.86 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $20,911,000 for 2018. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the operational costs for cluster I, including the appropriation and estimated expenditure for 2018 and the projected requirements for

2019, as shown in table 3 below. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information on actual expenditures to the General Assembly at the time of consideration of the present report.**

Table 3
Thematic cluster I: operational costs
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018			*2019*		*Variance*	
	Appropriation	*Estimated expenditures*	*Estimated variance*	*Total requirements*	*Non-recurrent requirements*	*2019 versus 2018 Increase (decrease)*	*Net requirements for 2019*
Category of expenditure	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(3) = (2) – (1)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6) = (4) – (1)*	*(7) = (4) – (3)*
1. Consultants and consulting services	476.6	538.9	62.3	471.7	–	(4.9)	534.0
2. Official travel	5 342.1	4 352.6	(989.5)	4 719.5	–	(622.6)	3 730.0
3. Facilities and infrastructure	9 551.0	8 724.6	(826.4)	9 142.3	286.3	(408.7)	8 315.9
4. Ground transportation	1 158.9	834.7	(324.2)	1 253.1	242.0	94.2	928.9
5. Air operations	349.0	324.5	(24.5)	1 357.6	–	1 008.6	1 333.1
6. Communications and information technology	2 153.4	1 936.0	(217.4)	2 078.8	204.3	(74.6)	1 861.4
7. Medical	246.6	145.3	(101.3)	195.3	–	(51.3)	94.0
8. Other supplies, services and equipment	1 633.4	1 588.6	(44.8)	1 872.6	124.6	239.2	1 827.8
Total	**20 911.0**	**18 445.2**	**(2 465.8)**	**21 090.9**	**857.2**	**179.9**	**18 625.1**

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)

20. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed resources for 2019 under operational costs for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi) amount to $3,352,800. For 2016–2017, actual expenditures under operational costs amounted to $5,333,200, compared with the apportionment of $8,819,800, reflecting an underexpenditure of $3,486,600 (40 per cent). For 2018, expenditures are projected at $2,582,700, compared with the apportionment of $3,477,500, resulting in an overall estimated underexpenditure of $894,800 (26 per cent) under various categories, including facilities and infrastructure, ground transportation, communications and information technology and other supplies, services and infrastructure. **Taking into account past expenditure patterns, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the estimated requirements under operational costs appear unrealistic and therefore recommends a reduction of 10 per cent in the proposed resources under operational costs for the Office for 2019.**

Official travel

21. The proposed resources for official travel for 2019 for the 11 missions under cluster I amount to $4,719,500, representing a decrease of $622,600, or 11.6 per cent, compared with the approved resources of $5,342,100 for 2018 (see table 3 above). Compared to 2018, the proposed requirements for 2019 for the 11 missions would: (a) increase for one mission (the Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Myanmar); (b) remain unchanged for four missions (Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions, and Office of the Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan); and (c) decrease for six

missions (Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)).

22. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, in an effort to reduce expenditures related to travel, a number of missions frequently use alternative means of communication, including videoconferencing and encrypted messenger systems. **The Advisory Committee welcomes these efforts.**

23. The Advisory Committee notes from information provided to it that the proposed resources under official travel for the 11 missions under cluster I do not reflect past expenditures, as summarized below:

Table 4
Official travel: actual and estimated expenditures for 2018: proposed requirements for 2019
(In thousands of United States dollars)

	Actual expenditure for official travel as at 31 August 2018	*Estimated expenditure for official travel for 2018*	*Proposed requirements for official travel for 2019*
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	$59 500	$168 600	$150 500
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	$228 600	$365 600	$365 600
Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	$43 900	$113 800	$113 800
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)	$0	$15 000	$50 900
United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions	$175 800	$256 500	$317 200
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	$748 000	$1 540 000	$1 648 900
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan	$134 700	$161 700	$161 700
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	$257 100	$401 300	$367 600
Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General for Yemen	$613 000	$805 400	$760 700
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)	$219 900	$393 200	$607 700
Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Myanmar	$85 100	$131 500	$174 900

24. The Advisory Committee will provide further comments on proposed travel requirements and related cost estimates for 2019 in its main report on special political missions (A/73/498).

Compliance with advance purchase policy

25. The Advisory Committee notes from information received upon request that, since 2015, the target rate of 70 per cent[4] for compliance with the advance purchase policy has been met only by the Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions. For the period from January to June 2018, of the other nine missions, not including the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, which did not have air travel to date, four showed a zero per cent compliance rate and the remaining five missions showed compliance rates that were significantly below the benchmark rate (see table 5 below). The Committee provides its comments and recommendation on compliance with the advance purchase policy under official travel in its main report (A/73/498).

Table 5
Compliance with advance purchase policy since 2015

Mission	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018 (Jan. to June)*
Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General				
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	0	2	2	0
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	0	3	19	35
Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	0	0	0	0
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)	No air travel undertaken	0	50	0
United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions	60	87	89	85
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	0	1	1	4
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan	0	6	4	0
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	0	3	5	15
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	0	1	16	13
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)	n/a	0	1	9
Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Myanmar	n/a	n/a	n/a	No air travel undertaken

26. **The Advisory Committee recognizes that, depending on the nature of the work involved, the predictability of certain types of trips can vary. However, the Committee continues to be dissatisfied that non-compliance with the advance purchase policy has been allowed to continue. The Committee expects that the necessary measures will be taken to improve the rate of compliance with the policy.**

[4] See A/72/7/Add.11, para. 37.

27. **Based on past expenditures, and taking into account the continuing low compliance rates with the early booking policy, the Advisory Committee is of the view that some of the estimated requirements under official travel appear unrealistic. The Committee therefore recommends a reduction of 5 per cent in the proposed requirements under official travel for the following eight missions under cluster I: (a) Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus; (b) Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide; (c) Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara; (d) Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004); (e) Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria; (f) Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan; (g) Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region; and (h) Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.**

Facilities and infrastructure

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)

28. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed resources for 2019 in the amount of $1,594,800 under facilities and infrastructure for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi) include $1,045,800 for the rental of premises because, following the end of cost-sharing arrangements with other United Nations agencies in Bujumbura, the Office will be responsible, starting in 2019, for the costs of rental, security and maintenance of the premises used. **The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to undertake efforts to seek out cost-sharing arrangements in the future, as appropriate.**

29. With respect to the amount of $396,000 proposed for petrol, oil and lubricants for the Office of the Special Envoy, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Office is currently not connected to the local electricity grid and that it operates generators to supply electricity to the mission. The Committee was also informed that the mission had depleted its fuel reserves because of local shortages in 2018 and would rebuild its reserves in 2019. **The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to explore the possibility of connecting the Office to the local electricity grid and/or utilizing self-produced clean energy, for example solar energy.**

Air operations

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

30. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed resources for 2019 in the amount of $1,305,800 under air operations for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen include $909,700 for the rental and operation of a fixed-wing aircraft under a cost-sharing arrangement with UNAMI in order to facilitate official travel of the Special Envoy and his staff. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that UNAMI will manage all flight operations and administrative matters, including contractual matters. The Committee provides further comments on this subject in its report on UNAMI (A/73/498/Add.5).

Communications and information technology

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi)

31. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed resources for 2019 under communications and information technology for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi) amount to $604,700. For 2018, expenditures are

projected at $472,700, compared with the apportionment of $669,700, reflecting an estimated underexpenditure of $197,000, or 29 per cent. For 2016–2017, expenditures under communications amounted to $517,200, compared with the apportionment of 821,300, reflecting an underexpenditure of $304,100 (37 per cent), and expenditures under information technology amounted to $503,800, compared with the apportionment of $615,200, reflecting an underexpenditure of $111,400 (18 per cent) (see also para. 20 above).

32. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 20 and 27 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs for 2019.**

C. Other matters

Key performance indicators

33. The Advisory Committee notes that one of the indicators of achievement for the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria pertains to the number of meetings between representatives of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the whole spectrum of Syrian opposition groups (A/73/352/Add.1, table 17, indicator of achievement (b) (i)). The Committee recalls that it was informed that the whole spectrum of opposition groups does not include those groups listed by the Security Council as terrorist organizations (see also A/71/595, para. 45).

III. Recommendation

34. The Secretary-General's budgetary proposals for the special political missions for 2019 which require action to be taken by the General Assembly are set out in paragraph 85 of his main report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/73/352).

35. **Subject to the comments and recommendations above, as well as those in its main report (A/73/498), the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2019 for the 11 special political missions under thematic cluster I.**

Annex

Cluster I: explanation of variances between the appropriation and estimated expenditure for 2018 and the total proposed requirements for 2019

	2018				2019		
Category of expenditure	*Appropriation*	*Estimated expenditure*	*Estimated variance*	*Reasons for variance*	*Compared with 2018 increase (decrease)*	*Total requirements*	*Reasons for variance*
Civilian personnel							
1. International staff	26 311.8	31 390.2	5 078.4	The projected overexpenditure is mainly owing to lower actual average vacancy rates than budgeted and higher actual common staff costs than budgeted for the Offices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.	5 792.1	32 103.9	The increase reflects mainly the application of lower vacancy rates in 2019 compared with 2018, taking into account the actual average vacancy rates in 2018, the provision at the actual average step in grade of current incumbents and the ratio of actual common staff cost expenditures to actual salaries, based on expenditure trends for the Offices of the Special Envoy for Yemen, the Special Envoy for Burundi, the Special Envoy for Syria, and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.
2. National staff	2 071.7	2 692.8	621.1	The projected overexpenditure is mainly owing to lower actual average vacancy rates than budgeted and higher actual common staff costs than budgeted for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen.	634.4	2 706.1	The increase reflects mainly the application of a lower vacancy rate in 2019 compared with 2018, taking into account the actual average vacancy rate in 2018 for the Offices of the Special Envoy for Yemen and the Special Envoy for Syria, the provision at the actual average step in grade of current incumbents and the ratio of actual common staff cost expenditures to actual salaries, based on expenditure trends for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen and the proposed establishment of 2 Local level positions each in the Offices of the Special Envoy for Yemen and the Special Envoy for Syria.
Subtotal	**28 383.5**	**34 083.0**	**5 699.5**		**6 426.5**	**34 810.0**	

Category of expenditure	2018 Appropriation	2018 Estimated expenditure	2018 Estimated variance	2018 Reasons for variance	2019 Compared with 2018 increase (decrease)	2019 Total requirements	2019 Reasons for variance
Operational costs							
3. Consultants and consulting services	476.6	538.9	62.3	The projected overexpenditure reflects the increase in engagements in the region by the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region to support high-level meetings and the increased number of consultations held during the Intra-Syrian talks by the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria. The projected overexpenditure is partly offset by projected underexpenditure under the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi, due to the less frequent holding of facilitation and mediation meetings as a result of the political environment, and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, due to the slower pace of peace talks in 2018.	(4.9)	471.7	The decrease reflects mainly a reduction in the duration of consultancies in line with the expected level of activities related to the dialogue and mediation process for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and fewer consultants based on the progress made under the previous rounds of negotiations by the Office of the Special Adviser on Cyprus. These decreases are partly offset by the increased requirements for the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, due to the increase in engagements in the region to support high-level meetings, requiring consultancies for both thematic and substantive fields, and translation and interpretation services.
4. Official travel	5 342.1	4 352.6	(989.5)	The projected underexpenditure mainly reflects the lack of political progress in the dialogue process for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and efforts to increase usage of alternative means of communication, where possible, and reduce the size of delegations and number of days travelling by the Offices of the Special Envoy for Syria and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.	(622.6)	4 719.5	The decrease mainly reflects the lower level of requirements expected for the facilitation of the dialogue process in 2019 for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and the reduced amount of travel as a result of the use of alternative means of communication, where possible, by the Offices of the Special Envoy for Syria and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

	2018				2019		
Category of expenditure	*Appropriation*	*Estimated expenditure*	*Estimated variance*	*Reasons for variance*	*Compared with 2018 increase (decrease)*	*Total requirements*	*Reasons for variance*
5. Facilities and infrastructure	9 551.0	8 724.6	(826.4)	The projected underexpenditure is mainly owing to the lower than budgeted requirement for the rental of premises in Damascus for the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, given that some of the rental costs would be covered through the anticipated cost-recovery from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The projected underexpenditure in that Office is partly offset by the projected overexpenditure under the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, owing to increased requirements for the rental of premises.	(408.7)	9 142.3	The decrease is mainly owing to reduced requirements for the rental of premises in Damascus for the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, owing to cost-recovery from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The decrease is partly offset by increased requirements for the rental of premises, security and maintenance services and fuel for generators for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and by increased requirements for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen related to the acquisition of equipment, security and maintenance services, the rental of premises and fuel for generators.
6. Ground transportation	1 158.9	834.7	(324.2)	The projected underexpenditure is mainly owing to the reduced requirements for operating costs, due to the lower number of vehicles than anticipated in the fleet for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, and the lower expenditure for the rental of vehicles for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi, due to the temporary use of a specialized vehicle from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.	94.2	1 253.1	The increase is mainly owing to the acquisition of two armoured vehicles based on security requirements which would support the movements of the staff of the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen in Sana'a.
7. Air operations	349.0	324.5	(24.5)	The projected underexpenditure mainly reflects the use of commercial flights for regional travel to the maximum extent possible instead of special flights and the consolidation of special flights into round-trips instead of stand-alone special flight legs by the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.	1 008.6	1 357.6	The increase is mainly owing to the rental and operation of a fixed-wing aircraft, which is cost-shared between the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

Category of expenditure	2018 Appropriation	2018 Estimated expenditure	2018 Estimated variance	2018 Reasons for variance	2019 Compared with 2018 increase (decrease)	2019 Total requirements	2019 Reasons for variance
8. Communications and information technology	2 153.4	1 936.0	(217.4)	The projected underexpenditure mainly reflects a reduction under the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi in the planned acquisition of new assets through the sourcing of assets from other field missions, the reduction in the usage of satellite communications through the use of local internet providers, the decommissioning of a communications system and a reduction in the number of desktop-computing devices.	(74.6)	2 078.8	The decrease is mainly owing to the reduction in the charges of satellite transponders through the use of local Internet service providers and the decommissioning of a radio system by the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and the lower requirement for the acquisition of equipment for the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Myanmar. These decreases are partly offset by the increased requirements for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, due to the cost of information and communications technology support services for the Aden office and the provision of replacement equipment for the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.
9. Medical	246.6	145.3	(101.3)	The projected underexpenditure mainly reflects the anticipated reduction in medical evacuation requirements in 2018 and the lower costs for access to shared medical services with other United Nations entities than budgeted by the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and reduced cost share for a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) clinic based on the actual deployed number of staff in Yemen by the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen.	(51.3)	195.3	The decrease mainly reflects the lower costs for the provision of medical services through a cost-sharing agreement with other United Nations entities for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi and the lower requirements for the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, reflecting the actual costs of medical services provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

	2018				2019		
Category of expenditure	*Appropriation*	*Estimated expenditure*	*Estimated variance*	*Reasons for variance*	*Compared with 2018 increase (decrease)*	*Total requirements*	*Reasons for variance*
10. Other supplies, services and equipment	1 633.4	1 588.6	(44.8)	The projected underexpenditure mainly reflects lower requirements for translation services for leaders' meetings based on the progress made and slower pace of the talks in 2018 for the Office of the Special Adviser on Cyprus and lower costs for freight and related costs based on the level of acquisition for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen. The projected underexpenditure is partly offset by projected overexpenditure for the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, due to the additional requirements for services related to conferences, meetings, peace talks, task force meetings and the 24/7 operations centre.	239.2	1 872.6	The increase mainly reflects the inclusion of support costs to be provided by UNDP and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to the Office of the Special Envoy for Myanmar, the increased requirements for conference and meeting facilitation services and translation and interpretation services in support of high-level meetings for the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, one-time freight costs for the acquisition of vehicles for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen and an increase in the monthly rate of individual contractors for the Office of the Special Envoy for Burundi.
Subtotal	**20 911.0**	**18 445.2**	**(2 465.8)**		**179.9**	**21 090.9**	
Total requirements	**49 294.5**	**52 528.2**	**3 233.7**		**6 606.4**	**55 900.9**	

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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for thematic cluster II (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 16 November 2018.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General (A/73/352) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. As in previous years, five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).[1] In addition to the budget proposals for the 14 missions presented under cluster II (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1), the Secretary-General has submitted a separate proposal for an additional cluster II mission, the recently established United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) (A/73/352/Add.6, A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.1 and A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.2).

[1] A/73/352/Add.1, A/73/352/Add.2, A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1, A/73/352/Add.3, A/73/352/Add.4 and A/73/352/Add.5.

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The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions are contained in its main report (A/73/498), and the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA, UNAMI and UNITAD are covered in its related reports.[2]

II. Budget performance for 2018 and resource requirements for 2019

3. Table 1 provides information on the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for the 13 continuing special political missions under cluster II,[3] compared with the approved resources and projected expenditures for 2018.

Table 1
Resource requirements for 2019
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018			*2019*		*Variance versus 2018*	*Net requirements for 2019*
	Appropriation	*Estimated expenditures*	*Estimated variance*	*Total requirements*	*Non-recurrent requirements*	*Increase (decrease)*	
Mission	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(3)=(2)-(1)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)=(4)-(1)*	*(7)=(4)-(3)*
Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea	2 185.8	2 267.0	81.2	–	–	(2185.8)	81.2[a]
Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo	1 288.9	1 344.5	55.6	1 319.2	–	30.3	1 374.8
Panel of Experts on the Sudan	978.9	1 024.0	45.1	1 072.3	–	93.4	1 117.4
Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	3 294.9	3 222.6	(72.3)	2 963.6	–	(331.3)	2 891.3
Panel of Experts on Libya	1 250.1	1 381.2	131.1	1 406.3	–	156.2	1 537.4
Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic	1 125.0	1 195.1	70.1	1 193.1	–	68.1	1 263.2
Panel of Experts on Yemen	2 154.6	2 115.9	(38.7)	2 280.3	–	125.7	2 241.6
Panel of Experts on South Sudan	1 349.0	1 322.6	(26.4)	1 357.7	–	8.7	1 331.3
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team	6 133.2	6 172.0	38.8	6 481.8	–	348.6	6 520.6
Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009)[b]	492.4	487.8	(4.6)	653.3	–	160.9	648.7
Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)	1 570.0	1 565.1	(4.9)	1 655.6	–	85.6	1 650.7
Panel of Experts on Mali	988.9	1 129.4	140.5	1 348.0	–	359.1	1 488.5
Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction	2 766.5	2 528.6	(237.9)	2 945.5	–	179.0	2 707.6

[2] A/73/498/Add.1, A/73/498/Add.2, A/73/498/Add.3, A/73/498/Add.4, A/73/498/Add.5 and A/73/498/Add.6.

[3] The Secretary-General proposes resource requirements for 2018 for 14 missions in his report (A/73/352/Add.2 and A/73/352/Add.2/Corr.1). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the mandate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea would be terminated with effect from 16 December 2018, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2444 (2018), and that the overall requirements under cluster II for 2019 had been adjusted to reflect the change.

	2018			2019		Variance versus 2018	Net requirements for 2019
Mission	Appropriation (1)	Estimated expenditures (2)	Estimated variance (3)=(2)-(1)	Total requirements (4)	Non-recurrent requirements (5)	Increase (decrease) (6)=(4)-(1)	(7)=(4)-(5)
Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate	9 932.2	9 872.3	(59.9)	11 029.8	–	1 097.6	10 969.9
Total	**35 510.4**	**35 628.1**	**117.7**	**35 706.5**	**–**	**196.1**	**35 824.2**

[a] The Advisory Committee was informed that the overexpenditure of $81,200 for the Monitoring Group in 2018 would be requested as an appropriation for 2018.

[b] The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/262 A, requested the Secretary-General to report on the budget of the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009) separately from the budget of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (see also A/73/352, para. 3).

A. Budget performance for 2018

4. The estimated expenditures for cluster II in 2018 amount to $35,628,100, representing an increase of $117,700, or 0.3 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $35,510,400.

5. With regard to the budget implementation by category of expenditure, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 2 showing the main reasons for the variances between the appropriation and the estimated expenditures for 2018. **Considering that, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2444 (2018), the mandate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea has been terminated with effect from 16 December 2018, the Advisory Committee trusts that updated information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

Table 2
Main reasons for variances between budget and estimated expenditures for 2018
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018			
Category of expenditure	Appropriation	Estimated expenditure	Estimated variance	Reasons for variance
	1	2	3=2-1	
I. Civilian personnel				
1. International staff	15 107.9	15 191.3	83.4	The overexpenditure is due mainly to the higher civilian personnel costs resulting from higher average step in grade and entitlements of the incumbents than budgeted for.
2. National staff	230.9	210.6	(20.3)	The variance reflects mainly the provision at the actual average step in grade and dependency status of the current incumbents and the ratio of actual common staff cost expenditures to actual salaries, based on expenditure trends for the Panel of Experts on Yemen and the Monitoring Group.
3. General temporary assistance	58.0	33.9	(24.1)	The variance reflects mainly that the salary payment for general temporary assistance is lower than budgeted for.
Total, category II	**15 396.8**	**15 435.8**	**39.0**	

Category of expenditure	2018 Appropriation	2018 Estimated expenditure	2018 Estimated variance	Reasons for variance
	1	*2*	*3 = 2-1*	
II. Operational costs				
4. Experts	13 485.1	13 426.0	(59.1)	The underexpenditure reflects mainly lower requirements for expert fees as a result of the delayed recruitment of experts who reached the end of their five-year limit on their contracts in 2017 and 2018 for two missions (support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and the Panel of Expert on Mali), offset in part by higher actual average monthly fees for the experts owing to a change in their terms of reference.
5. Official travel	1 860.6	1 935.9	75.3	The overexpenditure reflects mainly the requirements for travel of security officers to provide close protection to the members of the Panel of Experts on Mali pursuant to the security risk assessment recommendations by the Department of Safety and Security, which were not provided for in the budget.
6. Facilities and infrastructure	2 467.5	2 695.9	228.4	The overexpenditure reflects mainly the additional requirements for security services, which were not provided for in the budget for the Panel of Experts on Mali, the higher actual cost of rental of office space and accommodation for the international staff in Sana'a based on the new lease agreement with the United Nations Development Programme and the common security costs shared among United Nations offices in Yemen.
7. Ground transportation	150.6	92.5	(58.1)	The variance reflects mainly the lower actual cost of rental of vehicles in Yemen and a reduction in requirements as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has provided ground transport at no cost to the members of the Panel of Experts on Mali when they travel within the country.
8. Communications and information technology	1 241.7	1 117.6	(124.1)	The variance is attributable mainly to reduced requirements for database subscriptions as information is available in other databases of the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
9. Medical	–	8.0	8.0	The variance reflects mainly actual expenditures for the common medical services shared with all United Nations offices in Yemen, which were not budgeted for.
10. Other supplies, services and equipment	908.1	916.4	8.3	The variance reflects mainly the non-provision for regional meetings for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the meeting schedule is based on requests from the relevant sanctions committee.
Total, category III	**20 113.6**	**20 192.3**	**78.7**	
Total requirements	**35 510.4**	**35 628.1**	**117.7**	

6. Concerning the underexpenditure of $58,100 for ground transportation, which partially reflects the reduced requirements for the Panel of Experts on Mali owing to the fact that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali provided ground transport at no cost to the experts, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that some peacekeeping missions operating in the same location provided transportation during the start-up phase of a new special political mission, while cost-recovery or cost-sharing arrangements were being finalized. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the provision of ground transportation by a peacekeeping mission to a group of experts on a field trip and encourages the Secretariat to develop cost-sharing agreements in this regard and to apply them consistently, insofar as possible, with a view to reducing overall transportation costs.**

7. **While acknowledging that the overexpenditure for the special political missions under cluster II in 2018 amounting to $117,700 is limited and represents an increase of 0.3 per cent compared with the appropriation, the Advisory Committee considers that additional efforts should be made to improve the accuracy of the budget proposals.**

Staffing requirements

8. The Advisory Committee notes that the budget proposal for 2019 includes no request for new posts, while two posts are proposed for abolishment (one of Coordination Officer (P-3) and one of Administrative Assistant (General Service)) in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) on the basis of the workload projections for the procurement channel (A/73/352/Add.2, para. 175). With regard to the vacancy rate, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, as at 29 October 2018, of the 105 staff positions located in cluster II, 8 were vacant (5 in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and 3 for the implementation of resolution 2331 (2015)), for a vacancy rate of 6.7 per cent.

9. The Board of Auditors, in its report on the United Nations for 2017, observed that the granting of a special post allowance to staff assuming higher-level responsibilities had not been limited to exceptional cases during the biennium 2016–2017 (see A/73/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 93–99, and A/73/430, paras. 34–35).[4] The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that five staff members — four in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and one serving the Panel of Experts on the Sudan — were receiving a special post allowance as at 7 November 2018. **The Advisory Committee trusts that all vacant positions will be filled expeditiously and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to complete the recruitment process for the posts presently encumbered by staff members on a special post allowance promptly.**

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate

10. Upon enquiring as to the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate compared with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Advisory Committee was informed that, on the basis of the framework set out by the Security Council in its resolution 2395 (2017), the Executive Directorate assessed Member State capacity, analysed trends and challenges and provided counter-terrorism expertise for the United Nations. The main role of the Office was to coordinate United Nations efforts and build capacity. The Committee was also informed that the two entities reported

[4] The provisions governing special post allowance are contained in rule 3.10 of the Staff Rules (ST/SGB/2018/1) and administrative instructions ST/AI/1999/17, ST/AI/1999/17/Amend.1 and ST/AI/2003/3.

jointly on their cooperation to the Council, as required under paragraph 18 of the resolution.

B. Proposed resource requirements for 2019

11. As reflected in table 1, the proposed resource requirements for the missions under cluster II in 2019 amount to $35,706,500, representing an increase of $196,100, or 0.5 per cent, over the appropriation for 2018. The overall increase reflects the net effect of increased requirements for all current missions, except for the Monitoring Group and the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

12. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that, in 2019, the main increases in resource requirements by mission are proposed for the following reasons:

(a) Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate: the proposed increase of $1,097,600, or 11 per cent, is attributable mainly to higher civilian personnel costs, based on the proposed vacancy rate of 5 per cent applied for all positions, compared with the rate of 5 per cent applied for 44 positions and rate of 50 per cent applied for six new posts approved in 2018;

(b) Panel of Experts on Mali: the proposed increase of $359,100, or 36.3 per cent, is due mainly to higher civilian personnel costs, based on the application of a vacancy rate of 5 per cent in 2019 compared with the rate of 50 per cent approved for 2018 and the requirement for close protection security services for the experts during their travel in Mali;

(c) Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team: the proposed increase of $348,600, or 5.7 per cent, is attributable mainly to the higher civilian personnel costs resulting from the application of a vacancy rate of 5 per cent in 2019 compared with the rate of 14 per cent approved in 2018, in addition to the higher actual average fees for the experts resulting from the changes in the composition of the Team and their terms of reference.

13. The proposed increase would be partially offset by a decrease of $2,185,800 in the resource requirements for the Monitoring Group owing to the termination of the mission's mandate with effect from 16 December 2018 and of $331,300 in the resources for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is attributable to the fact that the security reinforcement of the office of the experts in the DC-2 building, for which resources were approved in 2018, is expected to be completed in 2018 and will not require additional resources in 2019 and to reduced database subscriptions in 2019 based on actual expenditure in 2018 (A/73/352/Add.2, para. 68).

14. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 3, showing the reasons for the variances between the appropriation for 2018 and the budget proposal for 2019.[5]

[5] Table 3 reflects the 13 continuing missions under cluster II, without UNITAD.

Table 3
Main reasons for variances between appropriation for 2018 and budget for 2019
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018	*2019*	*Variance*	
Category of expenditure	*Appropriation*	*Total requirements*	*2018 versus 2019 Increase (decrease)*	*Reasons for variance*
	1	*2*	*3=2-1*	
II. Civilian personnel				
1. International staff	15 107.9	16 695.1	1 587.2	The variance is due mainly to the application of a vacancy rate of 5 per cent to the cost estimates compared with the rate of 5 per cent factored for the six positions established in 2018 for the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the one position for the Panel of Experts on Mali. This is partly offset by the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the proposed abolishment of one position of Coordination Officer (P-3) and one position of Administrative Assistant (General Service — Other level) in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).
2. National staff	230.9	52.6	(178.3)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the provision at the actual average step in grade and dependency status of the current incumbents, as well as the ratio of actual common staff cost expenditures to actual salaries, based on expenditure trends for the Panel of Experts on Yemen.
3. General temporary assistance	58.0	–	(58.0)	The variance is due to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group.
Total, category II	**15 396.8**	**16 747.7**	**1 350.9**	
III. Operational costs				
4. Experts	13 485.1	12 609.1	(876.0)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and was offset in part by the higher average actual fees of the experts owing to the change in their terms of reference requiring at least 10 years of experience, instead of 7, in 8 of the 14 special political missions, as well as the provision of the full requirements for the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009) in 2019, whereas a vacancy rate of 50 per cent had been approved in 2018.
5. Official travel	1 860.6	1 926.1	65.5	The variance reflects mainly the requirements for travel of security officers to provide close protection to the experts pursuant to the security risk assessment recommendations by the Department of Safety and Security, which were not provided for in the budget for 2018 for the Panel of Experts on Mali. This is partly offset by the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group.

Category of expenditure	2018 Appropriation	2019 Total requirements	Variance: 2018 versus 2019 Increase (decrease)	Variance: Reasons for variance
	1	2	3 = 2-1	
6. Facilities and infrastructure	2 467.5	2 419.8	(47.7)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the removal of provision for security services relating to costs of security officers travelling from other United Nations locations, and the fact that the reinforcing of the security of the office of the experts on the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the DC-2 building, for which resources were approved in 2018, is expected to be completed in 2018 and will not require further resources in 2019. This is offset in part by the higher actual cost of rental of office space and accommodation for international staff in Sana'a on the basis of the new lease agreement with the United Nations Development Programme and the common security costs shared among United Nations offices in Yemen.
7. Ground transportation	150.6	76.5	(74.1)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group, the lower actual cost of rental of vehicles in Yemen and the reduction in requirements as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has provided ground transport at no cost to the members of the Panel of Experts on Mali when they travel within the country.
8. Communications and information technology	1 241.7	1 044.7	(197.0)	The variance is attributable mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the reduced requirements for database subscriptions as information is available in other databases of the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
9. Medical	–	8.0	8.0	The variance reflects mainly actual expenditures for the common medical services shared with all United Nations offices in Yemen, which were not budgeted for in 2018.
10. Other supplies, services and equipment	908.1	874.6	(33.5)	The variance is due mainly to the termination of the mandate of the Monitoring Group and the non-provision for regional meetings for the Panel of Expert for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the meeting schedule is based on requests from the relevant sanctions committee.
Total, category III	**20 113.6**	**18 958.8**	**(1 154.8)**	
Total requirements	**35 510.4**	**35 706.5**	**196.1**	

Experts

15. With regard to the proposed resource increase of $751,500 for the experts under cluster II in 2019, the Advisory Committee notes that it reflects the implementation of the recommendation of the United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry concerning the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the number of years of experience required for the experts be increased from 7 to 10 (see S/2017/713). The Committee recalls that in 2018 the Secretary-General requested increased resources for the experts on mission in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan in relation to those new terms of reference (A/72/7/Add.12, paras. 20–21). The Committee was provided with information indicating that, as at 29 October 2018, all the experts on monitoring groups, teams and panels established by the Security Council, with one exception, had at least 10 years of experience. **The Committee notes that additional resources for the experts are proposed again for the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo ($13,400) and the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ($17,700) in 2019.**

16. **The Advisory Committee recalls its comments on the correlation between increased years of service from 7 to 10 and the potential for reduced security risks to the experts of the panels. The Committee trusts that additional information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for 2019 for the special political missions under cluster II (see A/72/7/Add.12, para. 22).**

17. Concerning the profile of the experts, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the recruitment, selection and administration of the experts on monitoring teams, groups and panels established by the Security Council were governed by the administrative instruction on consultants and individual contractors (ST/AI/2013/4). The Committee was also informed that, when selecting the experts, competence and merit were the primary considerations, while every effort was made to take into account geographical and gender balance.

Standard of accommodation for air travel of experts on monitoring teams, groups and panels

18. With regard to the standard of air travel for the experts, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that administrative arrangements for the experts were made in accordance with the framework and policies applicable to consultants. Accordingly, their travel is conducted in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 67/254 A and 71/272 B and administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3 and the amendments thereto. Economy class is the standard of accommodation for air travel in all cases, irrespective of the duration of the journey, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary-General, taking into account the circumstances of the traveller, including possible health issues.[6] **The Committee recalls that the nature of the work of the experts on the sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels is distinct from that performed under other consultancy contracts. The Committee therefore reiterates its recommendation that the General Assembly extend the standard of accommodation of the staff members of the Secretariat to these experts (see A/71/822, para. 7, and A/72/7/Add.12, para. 29).**

[6] See also the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of air travel policies in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2017/3, paras. 56–57).

III. Conclusion and recommendation

19. The budgetary proposals made by the Secretary-General for the special political missions for 2019, which require action to be taken by the General Assembly, are set out in paragraph 85 of his report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/73/352).

20. **Subject to the comments in paragraphs 5, 6, 9, 15, 16 and 18 above, as well as those contained in its main report (A/73/498), the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposal of the Secretary-General for the resource requirements for 2019 for the 13 continuing special political missions under thematic cluster II.**